

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

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OTHER PLAYS BY JOHN
MASEFIELD

THE FAITHFUL
MELLONEY HOITSPUR, OR THE PANGS
OF LOVE
GOOD FRIDAY
A KING'S DAUGHTER
ESTHER (*Adapted and partially translated
from the French of Jean Racine*)
BERENICE (*Adapted from the French of
Jean Racine*)
THE TRIAL OF JESUS
THE TRAGEDY OF NAN

POETRY BY JOHN
MASEFIELD

COLLECTED POEMS
SELECTED POEMS
THE DAFFODIL FIELDS
DAUBER
ENSLAVED AND OTHER POEMS
KING COLE AND OTHER POEMS
LOLLINGDON DOWNS AND OTHER
POEMS, WITH SONNETS
PHILIP THE KING AND OTHER
POEMS
A POEM AND TWO PLAYS
REYNARD THE FOX
RIGHT ROYAL
A KING'S DAUGHTER A TRAGEDY IN
VERSE

OTHER WORKS BY JOHN
MASEFIELD

SARD HARKER A NOVEL
ODTAA A NOVEL
GALLIPOLI
ST GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
THE OLD FRONT LINE
WITH THE LIVING VOICE AN ADDRESS
RECENT PROSE

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

A Play in Verse

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD



LONDON

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Printed in Great Britain by Richard Clay & Sons, Ltd., Bungay, Suffolk

First performed by the Lena Ashwell Players at
the Century Theatre, Archer Street, Bayswater,
at 8 15 p m , on Monday, 21st February, 1927,
with the following cast

(Characters in the order of their appearance)

Destiny	AGNES LAUCHLAN
Tristan <i>a Pictish Prince</i>	JOHN LAURIE
Dinan <i>His Steward</i>	OSWALD D ROBERTS
Kolbein, <i>a Scandinavian Pirate</i>	HAROLD PAYTON
Marc <i>King of Cornwall</i>	KYNASTON REEVES
Kai <i>His Steward</i>	PATRICK GOVER
Bedwyr <i>His Barly</i>	DONALD FINLAY
Sowkin <i>the Swineherd's Wife</i>	OLIVE WALTER
Pixne, <i>betrothed to the Swineherd's Son</i>	RACHEL HILL
Thurid <i>Kolbein's Queen</i>	AGNES LAUCHLAN
Isolt, <i>Her Daughter</i>	ESME CHURCH
Brangwen <i>Her Waiting Gentlewoman</i>	LUCILLE LORNE
Arthur <i>Captain of the Romano British Host</i>	HAROLD PAYTON
Hog, <i>King Marc's Swineherd</i>	NORMAN CLARKE
Pigling <i>His Son</i>	THEOROLD DICKINSON
Attendants	{ BETTY BEARDMORE VICTORIA PARKER

(From Front Stage)

DESTINY I am She who began ere Man was
begotten,

I am deathless, unsleeping, my task is to make
Beginnings prosper to glory and crumble to rotten
By the deeds of women and men and the ways that
they take

I am apple and snake

I show Tristan, the prince, in glory beginning,
And Isolt, the maid, in her beauty I show these
two

Passing from peace into bitter burning and sinning
From a love that was lighted of old I display
them anew

And the deaths that were due

(Full stage Tintagel)

TRISTAN You have brought me over the sea,
far from our home,

To a castle percht on a crag at the world's end,

B

I

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Yet never said why Then here, in the castle,
father,

Nobody speaks, but all go still as the grave,
As though they were under a curse What is this
 castle?

DINAN - This is Tintagel, the court of the
Cornish kings,

It is under a curse, for Kolbein, the pirate,
My enemy and yours, is a tyrant here

TRISTAN Why do you call him "my enemy
 and yours"?

DINAN Tristan, my son, it is time that you
learned the truth

Twenty years since, Meurchyon, King of Cornwall,
Lived here with Olwen, his daughter, and Marc,
his son

Kolbein the pirate killed King Merchyon here,
Seized all Cornwall as his, seized Marc as a prize,
Would have seized Olwen as well, to serve his lust,
But that my master, King Tallorc, chancing to
come here,

Saved her, by bearing her hence and marrying her
Kolbein became our enemy thus, son Tristan
He gave pursuit and killed King Tallorc, my
master,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KOLBEIN I will deal with the boys now , with
their fathers later

MARC Will you not take instead some double
tribute

Of copper and tin, or linen, or grain, or beasts?

KOLBEIN No

MARC Then a threefold tax?

KOLBEIN Not a thousandfold

I have things and beasts sufficient I want young
men

MARC Remember, you, that the gods befriend
the friendless

KOLBEIN I have not found it so your father
was friendless,

So I clove his skull for him here in this very
hall

Your sister's husband was friendless, so I clove
his skull,

And you are friendless and I will cleave your skull,
too,

Spite of the gods, if you go running athwart

Go, gather me here those thirty within five minutes

(He turns to go, growling)

You Cornish slaves must learn who is master here

(He goes out)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC What are you, strangers? What brings you to Tintagel?

DINAN I am a steward and harper, born in the north,

I come to speak with King Marc

MARC You have spoken with him
Now take his advice and go from this land accurst

DINAN You do not remember me, but we met before,

I came here once with King Tallorc, the time he wooed

And wedded the fair princess, your sister, Olwen

MARC I was then nine I forget you Stay!
are you Dinan?

DINAN Yes, lord, I am

MARC Why, welcome, Dinan, to Cornwall,
Now I remember well and is this your son?

DINAN Only a foster-son, lord loved as my
own son

TRISTAN Am I not your son, then, father?

DINAN No, Tristan, indeed
This lad is of royal stock, King Marc, your stock
He is the son of King Tallorc and your fair sister

MARC Mind what you say, friend

TRISTAN I, the son of King Tallorc?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC They swore to me that my sister died
in childbed,

With the child dead, too.

DINAN I spread that story, my lord,
Lest Kolbein or Kolbein's men should murder
him

The Queen, your sister, died, but her son survived,
And this is he, Prince Tristan, named from King
Tristan,

King Tallorc's father he is your nephew, King
Marc,

Is he not like your sister?

MARC Yes but, by heaven
This is a marvellous thing proofs must be given

DINAN Here is Queen Olwen's ring here is
her brooch

But on her death-bed she told me the rhyme
unknown

To all but those of the blood of the House of
Cornwall

She said that that would convince

(He whispers to MARC)

MARC It does convince me
You are Olwen's son, my nephew, welcome, then,
home

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

DINAN My prince and king, I have loved you
for all these years

Only for this great day I kneel to my King

TRISTAN That you shall never do

MARC No, never, indeed

Dinan, most faithful steward and loving friend,
You shall kneel no more to kings I create you lord
Of my southern march

But, O good friends, I forgot
You are in danger here, most deadly danger
If Kolbein learns who you are, he will have you
hanged

If not, he may make you slaves He is the pirate
Who killed your father and mine and governs
Cornwall

TRISTAN I know about Kolbein, uncle

MARC I hear him coming

Go aside, be silent, lest he enslave you, Tristan

TRISTAN I shall try not to be slave, being a
King

(KOLBEIN *enters*)

KOLBEIN Marc, your minutes are past, where
are the thirty?

MARC I have not gathered them, Kolbein

KOLBEIN You disobeyed

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Now I'll take sixty, with you for a sixty-first
You shall pull at a bowman's oar aboard my
galley

(He seizes MARC)

TRISTAN One moment, Kolbein ! Take those
hands from the King

KOLBEIN God's sake, young cockerel, who are
you that come crowing ?

TRISTAN You shall soon hear You boasted,
five minutes since,
That you killed King Meirchyon and his daughter's
husband

I am Tristan, son of that husband and that
daughter

You are my father's and my grandfather's killer,
You shall pay me for their blood Come out and
fight

KOLBEIN Tallorc's and Olwen's son ! Why,
they had no son

DINAN This is their son I nurtured him
secretly,
So that you should not kill him

KOLBEIN Dinan, the steward

MARC There are better proofs than that, he
is my nephew

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KOLBEIN I see he is he is Olwen's son to the
life

Boy, Tristan, son, I loved your mother of old,
I killed your father for love of her It is hard
To fight you, who are so like her

Listen, now, Tristan
Let us not fight, but take your kingdom, and
also

Ask what you please in settlement of our feud

TRISTAN I ask for a fair fight to a finish with
you

KOLBEIN As you prefer We will fight with
swords then, at once

This, being a blood-feud, I will swear my followers
To abide by what may fall See there in the bay
A rock with standing for two? That's where we'll
fight

We two will row there alone and fight to the
utterance

You agree, that that seems fair?

TRISTAN Most manlike and fair

DINAN He is merciless to the beaten, fair to
others

KOLBEIN So you will find me, Dinan, if I kill
Tristan

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Marc, who says nothing, is doubtless thinking the
more

You will be happy with Kolbein killed and away ?

MARC No I do not wish you killed

KOLBEIN No, you speak the truth

Though I killed your father and took your land,
you like me

Well, the cockerel has not killed me yet, far
from it

I am still King Come down the crag to the beach

I have wisdom, you have youth it is fair for each

(They go out)

BEDWYR *(entering)* Kai, I have word that
Arthur is coming to court

To ask for men for the war against the heathen

KAI It is not likely that Kolbein will grant
the men

BEDWYR Not unless urged, but urge it, Kai
I shall urge it

KAI Urge it? That must depend upon
Kolbein's will

And Kolbein's will must depend upon events,

And events, good Bedwyr, depend on more than me

But leave me Arthur's letter

(BEDWYR goes)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

A good man, Bedwyr,
But narrow in view, no subtlety, no breadth

(SOWKIN *enters*)

What are you, good woman?

SOWKIN Sowkin, Hog Swineherd's wife

KAI Why do you enter here?

SOWKIN Bringing our duty,
Our Easter duty of March black-puddings, lord
There, sir, a love of a pudding, as black as medicine,
And thick and soft as a lady's thigh do feel it
There's something to lean on in a day of trouble
There's a lordly life, to eat one of these at supper,
And lie awake all night feeling it doing you good

KAI What vile beast's corpse did you desecrate for this?

SOWKIN A love of a pig, lord, who felt like
 heaven itself

KAI Remove it into the garbage before it
 bursts

SOWKIN But it is for the King, sir, all blood
 and onions

KAI Go, bury it as I bid, and never again
Enter this hall Your place is the gate or the sty

(PIXNE *enters*)

You, girl, what brings you here?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

PIXNE O Sir Kai, a stranger
Is going to fight King Kolbein there on the rock
KAI To fight King Kolbein? Quick, I must
go make way, girl!

(KAI goes)

SOWKIN What are they fighting for?

PIXNE A blood-feud, the men said
It is King Marc's nephew, they said Oh, he is
 handsome !

He went just by me, with his eyes shining like stars
Oh, I hope he will win

SOWKIN You, think of no strangers,
Think of my son, my Pigling, whom you're to
 marry

PIXNE So I do, Madam Sowkin, but this man
is fighting

So that we shall be free, so the men were saying
He may be all bleeding red Oh, I wish we could
 hear !

SOWKIN Here's somebody come who is it?

PIXNE The stranger's friend,
All white as a ghost

(DINAN *enters*)

DINAN You Cornish women, be quick,
Fetch balsams, and run for water and make a bed

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

PIXNE Is the King's nephew wounded ?

DINAN Wounded to death

SOWKIN Run, Pixne, up to the spring, fetch
water, quickly

(PIXNE goes)

If we bring this chair, it will serve •What happened, sir ?

DINAN My boy, whom I loved as a son

SOWKIN Did he fight the king ?

DINAN Yes, he fought Kolbein much as a
young red stag

Might fight with a mountain bull he attacked
and attacked,

But Kolbein stood and pushed him off with his
shield

Then the lad, tiring, rusht and struck on the
helm

And Kolbein tottered as though he were hurt
Our hearts

Leapt when we saw him totter A good blow
more

Might have ended Kolbein then but the boy was
spent

Then Kolbein laughed and strode to him and smote
him

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Grovelling to the rock So, seeing him down,
I came to ready his death-bed

SOWKIN We'll help the lad
You fly to a safety, sir, before Kolbein comes

DINAN No, I will stay with my lad Listen
They're coming,

Bearing him up the steps cut in the cliff

TRISTAN Take care

DINAN Come, madam, help me

(TRISTAN *enters*)

TRISTAN I am only bruised, not hurt
Help him into the chair, bring water and wine^e

(KOLBEIN is helped in)

KOLBEIN That is the last time Kolbein will
climb that stairway

Dinan, why do you gape? You thought I had killed him?

I had, too only I slipped it was too great odds
Wisdom against man's youth, for youth has the
luck

I slipped as I went to end him he ended me

(He drinks)

Listen, you, Marc

I have made your fiefs and mine one Kingdom
only

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Let that be kept I have a daughter in Ireland
Isolt, her name is Marc, you must marry Isolt
My Irish fief shall be yours then, Cornwall, too
Will you marry Isolt ?

MARC If she will have me

KOLBEIN Swear

MARC I swear to marry your daughter, if she
consent

KOLBEIN If she refuse, may my dying curses
blast her

Now, Tristan, you Hearken the rest
When I am dead, carry my body to Ireland,
Tell my Queen Thurid and Isolt to take you to
friendship

The blood-feud is to end, on pain of my curse
Bring Isolt back to Tintagel to marry Marc
Swear you will do this

TRISTAN I swear I will do your will

KOLBEIN When you have borne my corpse
home,

Bid my men bury me in my ship on the beach,
So that in gales the shingle will screech above me
Now I'll die standing up (*He stands*)
I am Kolbein, you dead, Kolbein Blood-axe, the
King ! (*He falls*)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC He is dead, King Kolbein

DINAN Justice is done on him now

TRISTAN Cover his face

KAI All hail, King Marc of Cornwall !

BEDWYR All hail, Prince Tristan, setter free
of the land !

TRISTAN King Marc, may this body be decked
and carried to ship ?

Then I will sail at once for the Princess Isolt

MARC Shroud him and strew him, you women
Follow me, men

(He goes out with the MEN)

SOWKIN With a proud forefoot this ship rose
to the sea,

But under all seas and ships are the dooms waiting

CURTAIN

(Half minute's interval)

(Full stage Corsnafon)

QUEEN THURID ISOLT BRANGWEN TRISTAN

TRISTAN I come as a herald from Cornwall
I say that Kolbein

Is dead of a wound I dealt him in fight

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

There shall be no feud between us, Tristan the
Prince

ISOLT As my mother says, we are slaves set
free we bless you

TRISTAN I thank you both

I am charged by King Marc of Cornwall
(Under Kolbein's will) to offer this fair princess
His hand and crown

QUEEN It is nobly offered of Marc

TRISTAN While you debate the offer, it is my
office

To bury Kolbein, will you attend his burial ?

QUEEN I have longed for his burial more than
twenty years

ISOLT He killed my father the day before I
was born,

It was that that made me his daughter Bury
him deep

TRISTAN He killed my father also, before I was
born

He shall be buried deep

(He goes out)

QUEEN Here is the granting of twenty years of
prayer,

Kolbein is dead, you are set free, with the offer

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

To be queen to King Marc of Cornwall, also set free
He, too, was a slave to Kolbein, he is young, just,
gentle

What do you think of the suit?

ISOLT You are foretelling

What do you think?

QUEEN I think he is worthy of you

ISOLT Worthy, yes, but what will the end of
 it be?

QUEEN That which you make

ISOLT	Only a part can be made
-------	-------------------------

Something tells me that there is no quiet for women
Who come as foreigner queens into stranger courts

QUEEN No fate is to be dreaded, but borne, or
changed

ISOLT Mother, what will my fate be?

QUEEN A strange and a royal

Isolt Happy?

QUEEN Much mixed with love out of the ages

ISOLT There is no avoiding fate, going or staying

And to go is royal and liker a queen than to stay
So I will go to this Marc

(TRISTAN *enters*)

QUEEN Is the dead man buried?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN His men have laid him in howe I
have scattered earth

QUEEN The winter then being gone, let the
spring begin

ISOLT Prince, I accept Marc's offer of hand and
crown

TRISTAN In my uncle's name, I thank you for
this great grace

ISOLT And to you, who have brought the grace,
I offer thanks

QUEEN How soon will you rob me of my
daughter, O Prince?

TRISTAN Now, if she will, the wind is fair,
the ship ready

ISOLT It shall be now

(She goes out)

TRISTAN I will order the ship brought near
(He goes out)

QUEEN The day that Isolt was born, the
spae-wife told me

That I had borne one knitted to tragical love
What can love and knowledge avail, with
Destiny?

(She fetches a casket)

Is Brangwen there?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(BRANGWEN *enters*)

Brangwen, you follow the princess into Cornwall
Swear that upon her marriage day you will
make

Occasion for Marc and Isolt to drink this
It is a love-drink those who drink it together
Are bound in a lasting love See that they
drink it

BRANGWEN I swear they shall drink this
wine on their marriage night

QUEEN Thank you, good Brangwen I leave
the flasket with you

(*The QUEEN goes out*)

BRANGWEN Would I might drink it in love,
that a King might love me !

(TRISTAN *enters*)

TRISTAN The ship is ready below, will you
tell the princess ?

BRANGWEN I will go tell her at once

(BRANGWEN *goes out*)

TRISTAN When I have landed her, I must
leave Tintagel,
I dare not stay for her wedding, nor see her
again
I cannot look on her face without loving her

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(ISOLT *enters*)

ISOLT Since we sail at once, how soon shall we
reach Tintagel?

TRISTAN Sunset to-morrow

ISOLT It is a leap into darkness

TRISTAN But you bring light

ISOLT Shall I see you often in Cornwall?

TRISTAN No, lady, never

ISOLT Never? Why not?

TRISTAN Because I go to my Kingdom

ISOLT You mean that we may not meet, after
to-morrow?

(TRISTAN *nods*)

Not even there at my wedding?

TRISTAN I shall wish you joy

ISOLT Stay till then, prince, that at least one
friendly face

May shine among all those haters of foreign
queens

TRISTAN No one who looks on you will ever
hate you,

Save from jealousy or envy but after to-morrow
I shall not see you I shall not forget you, though

ISOLT Nor I you, Tristan, because you have
altered my life

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN And you mine, Isolt, as I thank God
 But come now
To the ship that strains to be gone, and the life
 beginning
ISOLT Look, here is wine will you drink to
 the life beginning ?
TRISTAN With all my heart, but I see no wine-
 cup nor horn
ISOLT There in the niche on the stair is a cup
 of crystal
TRISTAN It is broken to pieces, see
ISOLT It was Kolbein's cup,
He called it his Luck it is broken like Kolbein's
 self
What can we drink from ?
TRISTAN The wine is fragrant as June
 (DINAN *enters*)
DINAN I bring a gift for the princess Isolt, a
 shell
Drawn up but now in the bay with the anchor
 flukes
We say that the sea-brought things bring fortune,
 lady,
So we cleansed it it is strange may it bring you
 fortune

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT I thank you for gift and wish strange
things drift hither

DINAN Princess, your gear is aboard and the
ship is ready

TRISTAN We will come aboard in a few short
moments, then

(DINAN goes)

ISOLT Here is the fortunate cup brought by
the sea

I drink to your fortune, prince Will you drink to
mine?

TRISTAN To your fortune, Isolt, princess be
it ever happy

O golden beauty, I love you so that I die
If you cannot speak some solace, I am but dead

ISOLT I cannot speak a solace, being so swayed,
But you are my one thought, you are my life, my
love,

I care not what may happen so I have you

(They embrace)

TRISTAN To-night at sea we shall be each
other's, beloved

(TRISTAN goes out)

ISOLT I am sworn to Marc . . . what matter?
Though the world end

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

I have drunken a queen's fortune, O love, O
love !

(BRANGWEN *enters*)

BRANGWEN Lady, the Queen your mother
and all the house

Are there at the ship to see you sail

ISOLT I come, then

BRANGWEN O lady, my mistress, you have
drunk of the wine

It is magical wine, and I know not what may come

ISOLT Can it matter what may come ? I have
been in heaven ,

The joy of its beauty is over me like great flames

CURTAIN

(*Half minute's interval*)

(*Full stage Tintagel*)

ARTHUR Now that the wedding is over, I must
be gone

King Marc has a lovely bride

KAI The wedding went well,
Save for young Tristan a most rude, wild young
man ,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

He thrust Queen Isolt ashore and would not stay
Even to wish his uncle joy What could he mean?

ARTHUR He needed the wind and tide Now
 I'm for the war

King Marc is sending me men farewell, good Ka1

KAI Farewell, Lord Arthur

(ARTHUR goes)

A good man, but no depth

Why should this Tristan fly like that from the wedding?

He has offered Queen Isolt love and been rebuffed
I know young men it is that she has boxed his
ears

(TRISTAN *enters*)

TRISTAN Where is Queen Isolt? I wish to
speak with Queen Isolt

KAR Her Majesty has gone to the bridal
chamber

TRISTAN The King's not there?

KAI His Majesty is in council,
Deeply concerned that you were not at his wedding

TRISTAN I cannot help his concern Where is
the bride-room ?

KAI You cannot go to the Queen of Cornwall's room.

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN Where is it ? I wish to see her

KAI My prince, consider

She is unrobing now, on her marriage night

(ISOLT enters)

ISOLT Good steward, Sir Kai, will you find

Sir Constans for me ?

Prince Tristan, we thought you had fled Welcome to Cornwall

KAI I will find Sir Constans as Your Majesty bids

ISOLT I thank you

(KAI goes)

Why did you fly before our wedding ?

TRISTAN Fly, O Isolt, beloved !

ISOLT O Tristan, hush !

KAI (*re-entering*) May I bring commands to Sir Constans ?

ISOLT We wish to see him

KAI Your Majesty will pardon my asking more

Is it your pleasure that he attend you here ?

ISOLT No, at the robing-room

KAI (*going again*) Madam, he shall attend

TRISTAN Isolt, my darling, this marriage must not be

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Whatever we swore or promised to Kolbein or
Marc,

Is burnt all blank by our love Why are you
shrinking?

Kai's gone

ISOLT But he suspects, he is peering and
prying

No he is coming back Stand further away

KAI Pardon my troubling, but at which
robing-room

Shall he attend?

ISOLT The robing-room of the Queen

KAI At the Queen's I thank Your Grace

TRISTAN Will you now leave us?

KAI Pardon, Prince Tristan, the Queen's will
must be done

ISOLT The Queen thanks you, Sir Kai, for
zealous service

KAI I thank the Queen may she never lack
loyal servants

(KAI goes)

ISOLT You see that he suspects

TRISTAN We are done with suspicion

What they suspect or know is naught to the
truth

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

We are each other's, and this pretence that we
tried—

That you could keep to your promise and I to my
oath—

Is nothing, nothing, but false , it is false as hell
And I am here Look, darling, you know as I do
That we are each other's You are mine, mine
only

ISOLT Marc will be here, Kai said somebody
said

Look at the door

TRISTAN There is no one there

ISOLT ^ Not yet

But I am Marc's wife, with a ring, in a few
moments

I have to go to his bed

TRISTAN That you never shall !

ISOLT He has talked of it all day long, he is
greedy for me

TRISTAN Greedy? That scholar? Kolbein's
slave? Take the ring off

Look we must get from this, back to my ship

ISOLT Where is your ship? In the harbour
below?

TRISTAN No, Isolt

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

The harbour below is barred, with a chain across it
My ship could not get in she is there to the
south

ISOLT How did you get here then? Through
the gates?

TRISTAN I climbed
From the sea, and over the walls, for the gates were
locked

ISOLT But the crag is rotten with wrack, and a
slip means death

TRISTAN It was to get to you I have left a
rope there,

I could lower you down

ISOLT I could not it is too giddy,
To swing down there I have seen that
terrible crag

TRISTAN I would make you safe, with a knot

ISOLT It is beyond me

TRISTAN You are the Queen order the
gates to be opened

ISOLT Kai holds the keys he would suspect,
if I asked

TRISTAN He dare not suspect the Queen

ISOLT Even if I asked,
Even if I had the keys, if we climbed the stairway

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Down to the beach, Marc or his knights would
come, too

We could never reach your ship

TRISTAN Then I'll go to Marc,

Tell him our love and force him to fight for
you

ISOLT No, for God's sake do not, Tristan, his
 men would kill you

TRISTAN What else can I do? We are
 knotted into the nets

ISOLT Brangwen has gone

TRISTAN Gone where ?

ISOLT For my mother's love-drunk
Marc and I are to drink it together in bed,
So that we love each other O Tristan, I
 cannot !

TRISTAN I'll tear him in pieces rather !

ISOLT O quiet ! quiet !

Somebody comes

(Enter MARC, KAI, BEDWYR.)

MARC We have missed you, nephew, to-day,
at our wedding feast

Why were you absent ?

TRISTAN I chose it

MARC How do you come now ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Your ship was not in the port when the chain was
drawn,

Nor were you yourself in the castle when gates
were locked

KAI thinks that you scaled the crag

TRISTAN I scaled it what then?

MARC Then this is your rope that you left
upon the wall?

TRISTAN It is my rope

MARC You need not have run such dangers,
Gates would have opened for you, my sister's son,
You are my heir, remember

KAI At present, my lord

MARC But I need you, nephew And why
did you not bring Dinan?

I need him, too I cannot let this day pass
Without a sign of the love I bear to you both
I have a gift for you come

(He leads TRISTAN off)

KAI Sir Constans attends in the robing-tower,
madam

ISOLT I thank you I shall not need him

KAI He shall be told so

ISOLT Sir Kai, you were charming in all your
welcome to me

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI You are gracious, madam

ISOLT Sir Kai, might a new-crowned Queen
Ride for one short half-hour into the moonlight ?

I long to be quiet after the feast's tumult

KAI Take horse and ride alone ?

ISOLT Friends might come with me

KAI I will ask King Marc, who will doubtless
gladly ride,
Though the horse-boys are off duty till to-morrow
To ride in the moonlight doubtless would be
quieting

(KAI goes)

ISOLT He knows, that pryer and scraper, and
Marc must suspect
If we get horse, we will gallop but shall we get
horse ?

(BRANGWEN enters)

BRANGWEN The cup of magical love-drink is
made ready,
The bridal-chamber is deckt King Marc has sent
me
To bid you come to disrobe

ISOLT I have sent to the King,
Saying that I entreat a half-hour's quiet,
Riding into the moonlight

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BRANGWEN Was it Sir Kai
That you trusted with the message?

ISOLT Yes, it was Kai

BRANGWEN I heard him say to Sir Bedwyr
there at the door,
Even as I passed, that he would not bring such a
message

They laughed and agreed

ISOLT Where is Prince Tristan, Brangwen ?

BRANGWEN But, my mistress, he sailed this morning, leaving us here

ISOLT He was here a moment ago Where
did he go?

Has King Marc put him in prison?

BRANGWEN I know not, madam
He is not now with the King, for the King sent me
To say he awaited you

ISOLT I must see Prince Tristan,
Must know where he is, must plan with him what
 to do

BRANGWEN Madam, I hoped that all that
folly was over

ISOLT Over ! my God !

BRANGWEN But you have married the King,
Who loves you, madam, and now is expecting you

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT Go back to him and say I am suddenly
 ill

BRANGWEN That he will know to be false

ISOLT I am so ill, Brangwen,
That to touch that creature will kill me

BRANGWEN O madam, no !
He is a good, just King, handsome and noble,
Trust to his love, Queen Isolt, and give him yours
That was your promise and oath, and your mother's
 wish

As well as his own great longing You shrink at
 first,

But a husband is God's gift as a help to women
Besides, the magical wine will make you love
 him

ISOLT I have pledged Tristan in that no
 wine, no magic,

No wonder more in the world can alter my love
I am Tristan's queen, to the depths

BRANGWEN O madam, hush !

(Enter KAI and BEDWYR)

KAI Madam, I grieve to intrude I come
 from the King

To ask that, graciously, you forbear your riding
Until to-morrow, an hour and day more fitting

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT Say I am fevered, Sir Kai, and long to
be out

KAI Madam, I said so The King replied as
I say

BEDWYR He added, madam, that we might
crave your consent

To light you hence to the King, who is much
concerned

To hear of your fever and longs to comfort you

ISOLT I am not ready to go Where is Prince
Tristan?

KAI Gone to his rest

ISOLT What, killed?

KAI No, to bed, madam,

In the castle's landward wing

BEDWYR May we return,

To light you hence, in a moment?

ISOLT Give me two moments

KAI Thank you, Queen Isolt

BEDWYR We humbly thank you and go

ISOLT See, I am jailed by this Marc, watched,
wardered, turnkeyed

Would I were like the wolf that, trapped by both
feet,

Gnaws them both off and hobbles away alive

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Girl, there's some cranny or attic where I can hide ?

BRANGWEN They would soon find you

ISOLT But there is the coil of rope ,

I will tie that to the wall and let myself down

BRANGWEN The sentries are on the wall now,
going their rounds

You would be stopped on the way ! O beautiful
mistress,

Your queenly destiny calls, accept it queenly

ISOLT I cannot be queen to Marc

BRANGWEN But you are his queen

ISOLT Only by word, never in heart

BRANGWEN Word suffices

He has rights upon you right to use force

ISOLT I, too,

Have a little force, and a little knife, my Brangwen

BRANGWEN Queen, if you threaten yourself,

I will cry for help

(TRISTAN *enters*)

ISOLT O Tristan, save me, lest I be dragged
to the King !

Where have you been ?

TRISTAN With the King and seeking a
way

ISOLT Can we escape ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN Not now, nor to-morrow, maybe

ISOLT You mean I must go to the King ?

TRISTAN That, or I kill him

ISOLT O Brangwen, save me ! I cannot face
 it, I cannot

BRANGWEN My queen, take courage

ISOLT I will not go to him no

Girl, it is dark, for this night, only this night,
Go to the King in my place

BRANGWEN O my mistress, Isolt,
Never speak such things !

ISOLT Only to pledge him the wine
He will not see, will not know, will you do it, girl ?

BRANGWEN O hush, madam, hush ! the very
 thought is such shame

ISOLT I saved you, body and soul, when you
 were a girl

BRANGWEN You stopped my being a slave, and
 I thank you and bless you,

And pray God bless you, for that, but this is a sin

ISOLT It's a service you shall perform when
 your princess bids

Go, or I'll kill you

TRISTAN See, good Brangwen, we two
Are taken in nets, will you do this thing to save us ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BRANGWEN I should be known, and whipped
by the guards and spat at

TRISTAN No, girl, I promise not I am asked
by the King

To serve the love-drink there in the marriage-bed
I have seen that the room is dark I will make it
darker

With but one taper, and that away from the
bed

You will be in the bed before him in almost darkness,
And stay till you drink the love drink that's all
we ask

BRANGWEN All ! He will know that I am not
the Queen

TRISTAN How can he ?

BRANGWEN He will want more from me than
the loving-cup

ISOLT If we drug the wine with this, he will
fall asleep

BRANGWEN You will not bid me do this
terrible thing !

ISOLT As soon as he is asleep, you may steal
away

BRANGWEN Where shall I steal to, Queen, to
hide and be cleansed ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN Here, to our loves and our gratitude,
good Brangwen

BRANGWEN Suppose this drug that you give
should kill the King?

TRISTAN Girl, till your mistress had this
thought, I had planned

To kill the King as he came to the marriage-bed
That I will still do, if you do not consent,
And you, too, knowing so much

BRANGWEN No, do not threaten me, sir
I will do this for my mistress, to whom I swore

ISOLT Brangwen, the gods reward you

TRISTAN We will reward you

BRANGWEN But, hark ! here the Knights are
coming it is too late

(Enter KAI and BEDWYR)

ISOLT Sweet Knights, I am grateful for your
loving care

I will not trouble you now to light me hence

KAI Queen, the King charges us that we bring
you to him

ISOLT Kai, the Queen charges you that you
tell the King

That she, on her marriage-night, will now put off
All ceremony and clam , she is now going

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

To prepare herself for bed Good-night, Prince
Tristan

Good-night, Sir Kai and Sir Bedwyr Come,
Brangwen, come

(She and BRANGWEN go)

KAI Good-night, Queen Isolt

BEDWYR Good-night

MARC Is Prince Tristan there?

(MARC *enters*)

TRISTAN Yes, here

MARC And the Queen?

KAI Just gone to her robing-room

MARC. Is her maid Brangwen with her? Call her back, will you?

(KAI goes)

Come, Bedwyr, go to your bed, you are bed-weary

BEDWYR I thank Your Grace may to-night
be a blessed night

To you and to Cornwall, King

(He goes out)

MARC I thank you, Bedwyr

KAI (*returning*) The girl will be here at once

MARC Thank you, good Kai,

Now you, to your rest

KAI (*kneeling*) I pray good-night to my King,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

And joy, with a loving Queen, who will bring an
heir,

May never a traitor come 'twixt you and the
Queen

MARC Amen to that

KAI Will Prince Tristan say Amen ?

TRISTAN I was praying, Sir Kai, I did not
hear your prayer

KAI I will say good-night

MARC Good-night, good steward

TRISTAN Good-night

(KAI goes BRANGWEN enters)

MARC A good, true servant, Sir Kai I sent
for you, girl,

To give you this jewel of gold As my Queen's
servant

May your life in this court be happy

BRANGWEN I thank Your Majesty

(BRANGWEN goes)

MARC Marriage is solemn, nephew

I have been in the vaults where all our House is
buried,

Each in his bed of stone with his mask of gold

My father and his and his, eleven dead Kings,

Each felt as I feel now, and all are still here,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

For a House is a tree of souls, some, roots in the
earth,

Some, leaves in the air all one
Lad, you must soon marry

Isolt and I will think of a wife for you

TRISTAN I am not thinking of marriage this
yet awhile

MARC It is man's happiest state Will you
follow Brangwen?

And bring me word if the Queen has retired to bed?

(TRISTAN goes)

Invisible sprits of all my ancestors

Who watch o'er the House ye made, help me to
fortune

O unseen helpers, who once were my forefathers,
Help, that the tragical fate which wrecked my
boyhood,

May never return

(TRISTAN enters)

TRISTAN Sir, Brangwen tells me that the
Queen has retired,

She has darkened the bedroom for you

MARC Let us then go

I have not angered nor vexed you?

TRISTAN Never, sir Why?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC You fled my wedding, and then you have
wished me no luck

TRISTAN I fled your wedding, indeed, being
no courtier

As for my wishes, I wish more than I can say

MARC „I am glad that it is not anger, my sister's
son

Bring us the love-drink soon as I strike on the
floor

I will strike thus

(They go upstairs)

(ISOLT enters)

ISOLT This is the love-drink Brañgwen is
in his bed,

Waiting his coming What if he see through the
cheat ?

Or if she betray it ? A whisper, a gesture's enough
He's in his room there, undressing, this bridegroom
and beast

Not for me, thank God, not for me

TRISTAN Queen Isolt Isolt

ISOLT Hush, Tristan, not so loud

TRISTAN The girl is in bed

It is dark, but I'll leave it darker

ISOLT But oh, if she cry !

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN She dare not utter a sound, even if
he urge her

Where is your sleepy drug to mix with the wine ?

ISOLT I have not mixed it already, because
ah ! hark

TRISTAN It is the King
(MARC *appears above*)

MARC I am ready now for the love-drink
Is that the girl ?

TRISTAN It is I will bring the wine
(MARC *goes*)

ISOLT My mother asked that the bride and
her groom should drink

This wine, on their marriage night Pledge your
love, husband

TRISTAN To our love, sweet wife, wherever it
lead (He *drinks*)

ISOLT To our love,
Sweet husband, with all my worship, now and for
ever

(She *drinks, they embrace* MARC *strikes the floor*)

TRISTAN O my love, what was it struck then ?
That knocking sounded

Like laughter from outside life All this trick with
the girl

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Does but delay our trouble, you are still his

ISOLT I will be yours on my marriage night,
my Tristan

Here is the sleepy drug, for Marc shall sleep sound
When he wakes, I must be at his side, until then,
yours

(TRISTAN takes the drink upstairs)

ISOLT He will kill them, if they discover!

Yesterday morning

I had not seen him, and now he is all my world

He must be serving them now

(A clatter above)

O God, what was that?

Has he killed them? What was it that clattered?

Who's there?

What if Kai knew it and killed him? Where is
he now?

Why does he not come, or give signal?

(TRISTAN descends)

Is that you, Tristan?

What happened?

TRISTAN Listen, love, listen

ISOLT All's silent

TRISTAN Quiet, still do not you breathe

No, he's drugged it is safe

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT Why are you shaking so? Did he
discover her?

TRISTAN No,
But she was so shaking, she scarcely could drink
having drunk,
She dropped the gold cup on the floor .
I picked up the cup, but the wine was all spilled
What he drank

Was the bitter brown ooze from the drug it has
sent him to sleep

ISOLT Marc will not love her, then, but she
will love him

TRISTAN It is a grim night for the girl she
was proud
She shuddered

ISOLT To-morrow will be grim for us we may
shudder

TRISTAN Would God
To-morrow might never dawn

ISOLT It may never dawn
The world may end Listen The lovers are quiet
Now, for to-night, we have each other, beloved
Will you not take me, Tristan?

CURTAIN

(Three minutes' interval)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(Same Scene)

KAI You fellow, what are you doing here?
Who are you?

HOG Hog, the King's swineherd, sir, that the
King sent for,
About the killing of hogs

KAI I am the steward
I will consider what hogs shall be killed, if any
Be off now, where you belong

HOG May I speak to the King?

KAI To the King? No, certainly not Get
out!

(HOG goes aside BEDWYR enters)

Ah, Bedwyr, welcome
The King will not believe that Tristan's her lover
I gave him proofs, but he loves the Queen too
well

(TRISTAN appears above)

Still, I made him promise to set a trap for Tristan
The Queen has gone to stay at her summer manor,
The King has given out that to-day he will start
For a long week's summer-hunting out on the
moor

That is the trap and Tristan has fallen into it

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

He has told Marc that he feels too ill to come
 hunting,

He has sent Dinan to beg the Queen to return
The Queen will return to-night Tristan will
 court her

Marc and we shall return, and catch them, and end
 them

(ARTHUR *enters*)

BEDWYR This is your plot, Kai What does
 Arthur think about it?

ARTHUR I take no hand in't It is no quarrel
 of ours,

It lies between Marc and Tristan

 Besides, these quarrels
Must be patched up, we need our strength for
 the war

(*He goes out* MARC *enters*)

MARC We'll ride to this hunting, then You,
 Bedwyr and Kai,

It will be ill for you if to-night's trap fail
Swineherd, what is it?

KAI I settled his business, lord

MARC I see my swineherds myself What
 news from the sties?

HOG O my lord King, fine news —

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Farrowing came like the lily and went like the rose,
Beautiful, ten to the sow, and to-morrow's the
year

MARC Ah, yes, I promised that if you could
keep swine a year,

Not losing one from a wolf or a robber, I'd grant you
Freedom to you and to yours so I will, have
you lost none?

HOG Not yet, lord, no

MARC Have you hope of your freedom, then?

HOG No, lord, none that would be heathen,
to hope

I feel inside like a pan of eels being boiled,
But never let it be thought I dared to hope

MARC Who keeps your sties while you're here?

HOG My wife and son, sir

MARC Then to-night will be anxious watching
for you three souls

Well, come to me here to-morrow, if none has
been lost

By then, you shall all be free, with something
beside

HOG Thank you, my King

MARC And, Kai, remember, my swineherds
Report directly to me, when their duty calls

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI Certainly, lord.

MARC Bedwyr, come, we must ride
(*He leads BEDWYR off*)

KAI (*to HOG*) Never you dare presume to
come here again

Whatever the King may say, you report to me,
Or I'll give you cause to repent

(*KAI goes*)

(*TRISTAN comes down as HOG moves away*)

TRISTAN The trap has caught us unless I can
warn the Queen

What messenger can I send to stop her returning?
I have told them that I am ill, so I cannot go
I dare not trust Marc's courtiers

Perhaps this swineherd

O swineherd!

HOG Sir

TRISTAN Will you take a word to the Queen,
There in the forest, not to return to-night?

HOG That's a long way I couldn't be back
by midnight

TRISTAN You shall have my horse

HOG No, lord, no horse for me
Better not show it was you who sent the message
But going on foot takes time,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

And I must be guarding the swine to-night, my
lord

TRISTAN No one will rob the sties

HOG Yes, many might rob them
The slaves might do it to spite me Sir Kai might
do it

So as to keep me a slave, and if I'm away,

There's only my wife and son, to watch

TRISTAN I'll guard your sties to-night, if
you'll take the message

HOG You, lord?

TRISTAN Why not? Will you go, then?

HOG Yes, lord, I will
I tell the Queen she's not to return to-night?

TRISTAN Not to return to-night, whatever
happens

HOG I will not fail you, my lord

But you'll bear in mind

It's a deal to us to have freedom near

TRISTAN I swear
I will guard your sties to the death If I lose a
hog,

I pledge my crown that I will buy you your
freedom

Now go, and for God's sake do not fail

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

HOG

Trust me, lord

(HOG goes)

TRISTAN Will he be there in time? Will he
miss the Queen?

Marc goes a-hunting, does he? The quarry is
warned

CURTAIN

(The front stage)

ARTHUR Have you not hunted, Bedwyr?

BEDWYR Marc bade us return,
But he, meanwhile, has ridden to join the Queen
The trap that was planned is not to be set

ARTHUR I am glad that he scorned this trap
it was unworthy

KAI It is not unworthy to watch over Corn-
wall's peace,
And I tell you, Arthur, what I have since dis-
covered

Tristan had word of the plot someone betrayed it
He has sent that swineherd to tell the Queen not
to come

BEDWYR No, truly?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI He has And now, in the swineherd's
absence,
Tristan, this King's son, Cornwall's nephew, our
saviour,
Has gone to the sties and taken the swineherd's
place
He, the Queen's lover, is guarding pigs, while the
herd,
Who is the King's servant, goes warning the Queen

ARTHUR It is true he is guarding the sties, for
I saw him there

KAI Now let us teach both him and the
swineherd a lesson
Let us take his swine from under his nose to-night,
Ruin this swineherd's prospects of liberty
Which he plainly cannot deserve, and make this
Tristan

Such a laughing-stock as will force him out of
Cornwall

BEDWYR Raiding the swineyard would be a
 pleasant frolic

I will make one

KAI And Arthur?

ARTHUR This is no frolic
Tristan is dangerous with a spear in his hand

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI Dangerous? Grown men's wits are
sharper than spears

BEDWYR How do you plan to outwit him?

KAI I, in disguise
As an old, old man, will wheedle him from the
sties,

Then you and Arthur shall carry away a hog

BEDWYR And suppose you fail?

KAI I imitate old, old men
So that I cannot fail

ARTHUR No, Kai will not fail

But Tristan may not be wheedled

KAI Then Bedwyr may try

ARTHUR What will you do, Bedwyr, to out-
wit Tristan?

BEDWYR I will go to Tristan and say, "I'm
the swineherd's brother,
Come to relieve your guard" I will take his
place,

And when I have taken his place, you may take
the swine

ARTHUR Tristan may be less trusting than
you suppose

BEDWYR I imitate country-folk to the very
life.

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI That is true he imitates country-people
well

BEDWYR What will you do, Arthur, if Kai and
myself should fail?

ARTHUR In that unlikely chance, I should say
"Attack,"

Make an assault together Three against one
Should make us masters at least of a virgin
sow

KAI We might try that, if the other attempts
should fail

But they will not fail

ARTHUR I do not think that they will
Wait If the night-guard hear us thieves at the
pigsties

And come to the rescue and capture us red-handed,
We may be hanged at the nearest tree

KAI What nonsense
The guard will know the King's steward, and the
King's baily,

And the Captain of the Host We will start from
here, then,

An hour before first cockcrow?

ARTHUR Agreed

BEDWYR So be it

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI Since we rise so early, Bedwyr, we'll get to bed

(KAI and BEDWYR go out)

ARTHUR Deliver us from old men who are old women !

And here is Tristan

(TRISTAN enters)

And why in such hurry, my Prince ?

TRISTAN I'm guarding the sties to-night, and I need a knife—

A broad sharp knife for a stab, instead of a spear

ARTHUR Take mine, my Prince, so you work for the swineherd's freedom

TRISTAN Yes, I take part Will you come, too ?

ARTHUR No, I cannot

TRISTAN Why not ? Do come

ARTHUR Do you think that you need my help ?

TRISTAN One never knows in these moonless nights of the spring

ARTHUR True but to-night I have work to do with some friends

Are you going back to your kingdom soon ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN Not soon

ARTHUR Your father was on my staff in the
Pentland war

I stayed with him there you inherit a goodly
realm

TRISTAN It is a fair land

ARTHUR Why not go to it, Tristan?

TRISTAN Men can only play one game at a time,
Lord Arthur

ARTHUR Only one dangerous game
But you must to sty

"Look out before cockcrow" was your father's
proverb

I'll see that the night guard march that way
Good-night

(ARTHUR goes)

TRISTAN Something is plotted against me
that was a hint

I will "look out before cockcrow" I do not fear
them

(He goes off)

(Half a minute's interval)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(Full stage)

*The swineyard on the left of the stage, of wattled
hurdles*

TRISTAN She got the message, thank heaven,
I ruined their trap
I wish the swineherd would come,
For this is a lonely watch on a night so dark

(He hums) When Uther lifts his one stone pin
To drink at the brook below the whin,
Down in the hold
You will see gold,
But be quick, boys, quick, or tombstone

I wish that I had a dog someone is coming
Someone is coming, a light foot is it the Queen?
No, it's a man, and sobbing Halt there! Who
are you?

KAI *(disguised)* For the love of God, sir, mercy!
Are you a robber?

TRISTAN Robber, sir? No, the swineherd
Stand where you are
Who are you? Hold up your hands What are
you doing here?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI For the love of God, sir, help me to save
my daughter

We've been set upon by robbers Oh, I am
faint !

They burst in a cloud upon us You heard us
scream ?

My daughter cried " Run, fetch the swineherd,
father ! "

So, sir, I ran Oh, sir, I am faint Come swiftly
My delicate daughter, prey to ruffianly men,
And she a cripple since birth and not quite sane,
Like her poor mother now at peace in the mad-
house

Come, my good sir Oh, Christian swineherd, or
pagan,

There, you can hear her screaming Oh, come,
sir, hurry !

TRISTAN Hurry ! But hurry where ? Where
is your daughter ?

KAI At the little copse in the dip, there, down
the road

TRISTAN Strange that I heard no scream

KAI The wind was against it
And they choked the screams with a gag

TRISTAN Run back to her.

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

I will call my mates, who are dozing here while I
watch

Shout as you go

(KAI runs off, shouting)

(KAI returns at once)

KAI Alas, sir, lost, lost, lost ! Good Christian
swineherd,

You ought to have come at once when first I called
TRISTAN Is your girl killed ?

KAI Worse than killed, taken away
Taken by ruthless ruffians in her beauty
To guilty splendour in a kitchen of thieves
Pity a father's tears, an old man's weakness
Feel my heart beating, like a dying bird wagging

TRISTAN Run to Tintagel and borrow the
King's bloodhound

KAI Run ? An old man like me If you'd
a mother,

For her sake, run

TRISTAN I am sworn not to leave the swine

KAI Then alas for a lonely old age walking the
roads,

No daughter by my side, no filial prattle

Cheering the long tramp, ah ! and no woman's
hand

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Lighting the fire of twigs to cook the supper
O desolate old age !

TRISTAN You wander the roads then ?

KAI A ballad-singer, sir

TRISTAN Oh ? Sing me a ballad

KAI I am too broken with grief

TRISTAN Say me one, then

KAI I can say nothing but woe and alas my
 daughter !

TRISTAN Were you camped when the robbers
 came ?

KAI No, sir, on foot

TRISTAN Had you walked all night ?

KAI All night and the day before,
Thirty long miles through Cornish bog in the
 rain

TRISTAN Thirty long miles through bog in the
 rain ! You lie, man

Your shoes are as clean as a courtier's, not even
 dusty

As for your daughter and robbers, they don't
 exist

A nightingale was singing there in the copse
When first you brought the alarm Get home to
 your daughter,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

This cripple from birth who walks thirty long
miles

Be off !

KAI Then you don't believe me ?

TRISTAN I don't

KAI King Marc

Shall know who keeps his swine, he shall know
the truth

Then we shall see

TRISTAN That will be interesting

KAI And the world will see

TRISTAN That will be clever of it

KAI And King Marc will see what all of us
see already

(KAI goes)

TRISTAN Which of the courtiers was it ? It
was likest Kai

But I have not done with them yet Who is that
there ? Halt !

(BEDWYR enters)

TRISTAN Explain yourself

BEDWYR Be that you zwineherd ?

TRISTAN Who are you ?

BEDWYR Old zwineherd's brother Pig, sent by
old zwineherd

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN I didn't know he had a brother
Where from, you?

BEDWYR I be Queen's pigkeeper, out by her
zummer palace

Hog come to me to-night when he'd talkt with
the Queen,

Hog said "I've cut my foot, I'll be late reaching
sty,

Get you back, brother," he said, "and help young
master "

TRISTAN But Hog is coming? How soon can
he be here?

BEDWYR Dawn,
Or maybe an hour after Anyone been here?

TRISTAN Nobody

BEDWYR No? Then it was birds or the pigs
I could be sworn I heard voices, an old man's
voice

But indeed all be still as a stound no robbers
and nowt

Why, all be at peace and morning will be in a bit
All's zafe as a church I'll watch, you lie and be
easy

No need for two to be up If a robber should
come,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

I'd give 'ee a call you could be up in a trice
Do'ee lie down, my young master, and sleep while

I guard

TRISTAN No Since you said you heard voices,
the thieves may be near

BEDWYR I think it was just the hogs grunting,
or owls eating mice

TRISTAN It's better be certain than sorry we
both will stand guard

How is your brother's hip?

BEDWYR

Which brother's?

TRISTAN

Hog's

BEDWYR

Ah, Hog's !

His hip yes

TRISTAN Didn't he mention it?

BEDWYR

Not this time

TRISTAN You knew about it, of course?

BEDWYR

Oh yes, indeed, yes

All that he cared to tell

TRISTAN

He made no secret of't,

He gloried in't to me, for a hip like that

Not many men have, you haven't one, nor have I

BEDWYR Why, no thank heaven

TRISTAN It's nothing to thank heaven for

Many would give one hand for a hip like that

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

That was an odd case of Hog's wife's brother's
wife?

BEDWYR Ah, very odd!

TRISTAN It looked suspicious to me, Pig,
I don't know how it struck you, but I said and
say -

I shouldn't have liked the case to happen to me

BEDWYR Being out with the Queen's swine at
the summer palace,

I may not have heard the truth of all that story

TRISTAN Why, it was there that it happened,
you must have heard it

BEDWYR I heard it yes, but I believe only
half

The things that I see, and nothing of what I hear
Hog said I wasn't to let 'ee watch Lie down,
man,

Sleep while 'ee can to bed

TRISTAN I enjoy our talking

That's a pretty girl, Hog's daughter, with pretty
hair

Would you call the hair red-gold, or a copper-
bronze?

BEDWYR That's a hard question I'd call it a
sort of wryneck

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Wryneck or partridge mottle

TRISTAN

Do you think the lad

Who is always with her, means to marry her?

BEDWYR

Yes

TRISTAN What? Out of his mind as he is?

BEDWYR

I'm talking of Cadour

TRISTAN I'm not I am talking of one who
doesn't exist

There is neither lad nor daughter, nor wife's
brother's wife,

Nor hip, nor has Hog a brother, nor are you
swineherd

You are a courtier, I knew you from the first
Out of it, Arthur away!

BEDWYR

I am not Arthur

TRISTAN Then whoever you are, be off Take
that direction,

And make no signals

BEDWYR

All right, I'll go good-night

You won't have long to wait ere you see us again

(BEDWYR goes)

TRISTAN I have not done with these knaves,
worse is to follow

Now is the time for a raid, now the East grows
grey

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Here one comes creeping—or is it an old dog-wolf?
Halt, there, or I strike! Stand!

HOG Hist, young master, it's Hog

TRISTAN Let me be sure open your hands,
so Welcome

HOG Have they been raiding, master?

TRISTAN They are all about
Two, and their mates are coming, now is the hour

HOG I knew they'd come, so I've brought my
son and my wife

Come in, my Sowkin and Pigling

(They come in)

TRISTAN You are both most welcome

SOWKIN Good-morning, sir, and our thanks for
your kind watching

PIGLING I hope you'll find some use for my
holly ballow

TRISTAN You come in the nick of time They'll
be here in a minute

HOG Well, sir, we're four, I say "Get into
the pigsty,

In with the pigs" then, if they come to steal
pigs,

They'll be into our clutch before they know we are
there

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

SOWKIN Trust to my Hog, sweet sir, he's a
King at this game

TRISTAN In with the pigs, then Give me your
hand, good madam

SOWKIN Thank you, kind sir, that's it And
don't be afeared, sir,

The hogs won't hurt 'ee, and though they smell a
bit flighty,

It's good for the lungs if you breathe it deep in
down

PIGLING How about that supper, mother?

SOWKIN First make all snug

TRISTAN Come along, Hog

HOG That's that Now, Pigling, my son

SOWKIN Now we'll all sit out of the wind and
eat our supper

That's cheek in that, and this is cider in this

(They settle to supper)

(Enter ARTHUR, KAI, BEDWYR)

ARTHUR So you have not thriven? How came
it that you failed, Kai?

KAI The ruffian was suspicious and most
astute

BEDWYR I did not see round his questions,
he trapped me fairly

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ARTHUR What shall I do, then ?

KAI These are the pigsties, Arthur
He is not here . he has gone Look yonder,
 Bedwyr

BEDWYR No, there is no guard here

KAI O treacherous peachick !
Is that not like one of these sprigs of to-day ?
Take a poor swineherd's place and then break
 faith with him

He has gone to his doxy, or else to his bed of
 ease,

Leaving the swineherd's freedom to shift for itself

ARTHUR What shall we do, climb over and
 take a hog ?

Or pull a gap in the paling and drive them out ?

BEDWYR I should say drive them, but what
 is it Kai most wants ?

KAI To bring this whipper-snapper into dis-
 grace

ARTHUR Pull down the pales, then, and the
 herd will be ours

KAI The herd is the King's, Arthur, so are
 these palings

I as the steward will act here for the King

I will not risk the loss of a hundred hogs

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

We will step inside the pen and choose one hog,
Evidence to King Marc of his swineherd's slackness
And of Tristan's want of faith

We will take this hog,
Call King Marc from his bed and hand it to
him,
Saying "Thus do domestic traitors guard your
swine"

ARTHUR You are very bitter about this young
man, Kai

KAI Medicines are bitter I will be first to
lay hand

Upon a pig

ARTHUR Have you had much dealing with
pigs?

KAI No, but I'm competent to handle a pig

ARTHUR A pig is a big strong beast

BEDWYR But only at first
They tire at once, shut up like this they are
fat

ARTHUR You have dealt with pigs, then,
Bedwyr?

BEDWYR Once at the Fair
I wrestled a pig at the good old Cornish game
Of putting a pig into pen and I put him in

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ARTHUR Then you and Kai are designed to
capture him now,

I will stand outside the pen and help as I can

KAI Come on then, Bedwyr, Arthur shall hold
our clothes

There is my cloak, my cap, my tunic, no, strip,
man,

Keep our things clean we shall go from here to
the King

BEDWYR True I'd forgotten that Well, there
is my tunic

ARTHUR You cannot enter the swine pen in
those shoes,

Take off your under things that's better, much
better,

Now are you like those heroes, whoever they
were,

Who wrestled the what's-its-name in the how-d'ye-
call-it

BEDWYR Won't you strip, Arthur?

ARTHUR No, for I am the guard
If Tristan should reappear or the swineherd
come,

You will need defence, but the coast is clear,
are you ready?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BEDWYR Take a cruise round, Arthur, I doubt
that the coast is clear

(ARTHUR goes)

KAI No need for Arthur to go

BEDWYR It is safer so,
For these young devils, like Tristan, are full of
tricks

KAI Where on earth has Arthur gone? We
shall catch our deaths
We might have caught twenty hogs and have gone
by this time

BEDWYR He has just gone to the pen's end
to make certain

KAI I am not going to freeze to death in my
shirt
While Arthur looks at the moon I am going in,
Into the pen Come, give me a leg over

BEDWYR There you are, then What is inside?
Can you see at all?

KAI It is all safe Come over, Bedwyr, I'll
help you

BEDWYR Where are the pigs sleeping?

KAI In the corner yonder

BEDWYR Whereabouts, Kai? I do not see
them

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

KAI. Be quiet !

They are sound asleep we must do as the lion
does,

Leap upon one, before the rest are awake

Those dark masses below the pales are the pigs

BEDWYR I see them now Spit on your hands,

KAI

KAI The big one,

The fat hog nearest the wall, that is our quarry

BEDWYR Come on not another word

* * * *

HOG I'll learn 'ee steal King's hogs !

SOWKIN Down with un, husband !

PIGLING Ballow one, and ballow two, and
ballow dree !

BEDWYR O I am killed !

TRISTAN One of them's down !

PIGLING Hold to him, mother, until I give
him ballow

SOWKIN Quick, son, he's slippery as an eel in
sin

PIGLING I'll slippery him with ballow, ballow
'ee Bong

KAI Alas, alas, my country !

SOWKIN. Here comes another

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Get your sling, Pigling, and blast him like
Goliath

PIGLING (*opening the pen and coming out*) No,
mother, it's someone running Well might he
run !

TRISTAN There were only two, then ?

HOG. Two Here they are, both corpses

KAI Oh, water, water ! cold water !

BEDWYR My neck is broken !

PIGLING It hasn't been broken yet, you
haven't been tried yet

He's wandering mother, he thinks he's hanged
already

BEDWYR I'm one of the King's household

KAI So am I

BEDWYR We both

Are knights of King Marc's court eminent cour-
tiers

SOWKIN Look at this raiment here Courtiers
indeed !

Not courtiers, robbers, who robbed all these fine
clothes

HOG And thought to rob his sacred Kingship's
hogs

And might have, too, but for unprospering pride

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BEDWYR We are not robbers

HOG You are We heard your words,
You meant to take the fat hog nearest the wall

BEDWYR Take us before the King

PIGLING We'll take you to him
As soon as it is light then, cord to the windpipe,
To save your wives the expense of cooking break-
fast

KAI I tell you, lout, I am Kai, the King's
steward

HOG Now, quiet, quiet, remember your latter
end,
Don't take the name of the Lord in vain

(A horn is heard)

TRISTAN A hunting horn !
King Marc is coming a-hunting here is the King
(Enter MARC, with ARTHUR)

MARC I come to ask if a hog were lost this night
But what and who are these ?

TRISTAN They are thieves, King Marc,
Caught in the pen red-handed a moment since

MARC And what brings you here, Tristan ?

TRISTAN I came to help guard,
So that your swineherd might save his hogs to the
end

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC Bring the two thieves before me What
plea can you urge

That you be not hanged at once?

KAI My lord, I am Kai

BEDWYR And I am Bedwyr, the Knight

MARC Bedwyr and Kai!

What brought you into the swine-pen?

KAI We saw no guards

We got into the pen to defend the herd,

Then all these set upon us before we could
speak

MARC But why get into the pen to defend the
herd?

Defend them from whom? What brought you
here in the first place?

SOWKIN He came to take the fat hog nearest
the wall,

We heard him say so But that fat hog was my
husband

He wasn't a wise choice

MARC Did you want a pig, Kai?

KAI No, not to steal, but we heard that Prince
Tristan here

Was guarding the pen, and we thought that to
take a pig

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

From him, would be held good fun

MARC But the very thought
Of taking a King's pig, why, it is treason, Kai
You, as my steward, surely know that?

KAI My master,
We would have spilled our bloods to the last to
defend

Your swine from any but Tristan

MARC Do not say Tristan, nor even Prince
Tristan, steward,
He is a King

KAI I had not heard he was crowned
King Tristan, lord

MARC It is a serious matter
When stewards and knights break laws, even in
game

You have been hurt

PIGLING. I gave them a palt with ballow

KAI I am cold from my wound, lord, may I
put on my clothes?

MARC Why did you take them off? It is
Cornish law

That any man taking a thief may have his gear.
These clothes are Hog's and Pigling's, take them,
they're yours

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

And, Hog, I give you your freedom and rank you
here

My master swineherd

Be off, you two, to the castle,

Quick, ere the women be up to see you pass

(KAI and BEDWYR go)

Arthur, go with them fetch them a couple of
cloaks

You swineherds, move from earshot a little space

(They move off)

Nephew, there is much talk, which I never heeded,

Now there is much ill-blood which I have to heed

I cannot have my courtiers poisoned with rage

By you, who have no place here

I have been too tolerant

Your Kingdom cries for your rule

TRISTAN

I say let it cry

MARC It shall not cry in vain while Cornwall
demands

That you be gone from Tintagel Therefore, my
nephew,

I order you to take ship and leave this Kingdom

TRISTAN Order me to leave Cornwall!

MARC

Order you strictly

Banish you, if you choose, on pain of slaying

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

By the first man who meets you go before noon
TRISTAN You drive me out, you dare, drive
me, who killed Kolbein !

Why, uncle, you are King because of this hand !
(ARTHUR enters)

MARC 'Arthur has orders from me to see you
aboard

ARTHUR Come, Tristan, I have a sword and
you but a knife

There are twenty spearmen here

Must I call them, Tristan ?

(TRISTAN goes with him)

CURTAIN

(Half minute's interval)

(Full stage Tintagel)

MARC You asked for Tristan I said that he
is not here

That was not the whole truth, Isolt, I sent him
hence,

Banished him hence, on pain of slaying, in short
He has sailed to the north, never to come back
here

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT May I know your reasons for forcing
him hence thus ?

MARC Yes His own good first, since his king-
dom needed him

Then, since this folly of Bedwyr, Kai and the
swineherd,

I would not have him in Cornwall so he has
gone

ISOLT He was my friend, King Marc, he wooed
me to Cornwall

Ere ever I looked on you, could you not wait
Until I had said farewell to my banished friend ?

MARC³ Isolt, I wished him away before you
returned,

Evil tongues bracket your names together in gossip
Such talk must cease

ISOLT Is a Queen to be ruled by talk ?

MARC Yes, madam, yes, if she will not rule
herself

Tristan, a King, was keeping the swine while he
sent

The man with a message to you I am ashamed
That a friend of yours should have so little esteem
For you, as the Queen, as to send the swineherd
to you,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Whatever the message was, which I do not ask
Filthy, no doubt, having such a messenger

ISOLT It was not filthy it was a love message

MARC Love message ! Do you dare say it ?

ISOLT I do dare

It was a message of love from a man who loves
me,

Warning me of a trap for the Queen of Cornwall
Set by her loving husband at his Knight's bidding

MARC Now I will ask a question I meant to
spare

Why did he send the swineherd ? Had you in-
tended

To meet last night, if I were away ?

ISOLT Yes, we had

MARC You have met before, in secret ?

ISOLT Ask your court spies

MARC I ask my wife, beautiful Isolt, my wife,
Who pledged me her troth last week, the love of
my soul

Ah, my beloved, whatever the young man is,
Let it not weigh with a husband's love I love you
More than a boy can And we are married
Besides,

I have heard it said that often, when people marry,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

In the first days they shrink from each other
It's true

So he seems much to you?

ISOLT. There is no question of seems

MARC Love is a blindness full of seeming, my
Isolt

ISOLT There is no seeming in my love and no
blindness

Nothing else is, or matters, or means, save this
And against this shaking and transfiguration, you
Plot with a steward and lie to ensnare the Queen

MARC That passionate sin is done You are
married to me,

And I love you so that I will permit no rival

ISOLT I love him so that I am all his, to the
spirit

MARC Keep him from Cornwall, then he dies
if he come here

You are my wife till you die

Love me or not, I will not share you, believe me
(MARC goes)

ISOLT How was the secret known? Which
courtier learned it?

What did we do to betray it? Or was it Brang
wen?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Brangwen alone knew all, and the King knows
all

(BRANGWEN *enters*)

ISOLT Brangwen, come here to me Have you
betrayed me ?

BRANGWEN God forbid, mistress

ISOLT You lie, you have told the King

BRANGWEN O Queen, I had rather die than
tell of my shame

ISOLT You have loved King Marc since you
pledged him in the wine

BRANGWEN That is true, madam, may God
forgive me the sin

ISOLT You have told him all, hoping to win
his favour

BRANGWEN Sweet mistress, do not kill me I
swear to heaven

That I have not breathed a word Only this hour
Marc's men took me and threatened me with their
swords,

Said they would kill me if I would not accuse you
I said " that you harboured me, who am spotted
and base,"

That that was the only fault you had, sweet mis-
tress

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

That is the only betrayal I have betrayed

ISOLT Marc's men? Which? Bedwyr and
 Kai?

BRANGWEN Yes, and others,
With swords at my throat swearing I hid your
 love

ISOLT Who has betrayed me, Brangwen, if not
 you? Traitress,

It was you!

BRANGWEN Madam, it was not this I can
 prove

ISOLT Prove it then, swiftly

BRANGWEN Queen, at this very moment
Tristan is there in the glen I have not betrayed
 him

ISOLT Here, with a price on his head?

BRANGWEN Disguised as a harper
He is in a hut by the brook, he sent me to you
To say he will clamber the rocks up to your
 window,

Now, or some minutes hence

ISOLT O my God, as we talk
He may be there! O girl, forgive my suspicion,
I know not where I am led.

BRANGWEN Sweet mistress, my lady,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

I will deck you for him and make you fair for your
love

(They go upstairs)

(MARC and KAI enter)

MARC You say he is here, dressed as a harper?

KAI And plans

To enter the Queen's room, clambering up the
rocks

I heard him telling the maid

MARC He shall die, if taken

KAI After my humbling the other day I am
loath

To labour with zeal for the King, but to get proof
I have laid rye-meal upon the rocks and earth
Under Queen Isolt's window, and in her room
From the floor beneath the window up to her bed
If a man step in the flour, his track will show
It will be dark, he will not notice the meal

MARC How soon will he come?

KAI At once even now, my King

You will hear him come, for Queen Isolt's window
hinge

Is rusty and creaks

(Enter BEDWYR)

I posted Bedwyr to watch

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BEDWYR The harper went to the rocks by the
Queen's window,
He started to climb up

KAI Listen

MARC That was no hinge

KAI Tapping with finger-tips, she is going to
open

There is the window, my lord

BEDWYR He is wearing a sword

MARC Call Arthur hither

(BEDWYR goes to fetch ARTHUR)

That it should be my wife and nephew who wrong
me,

Those nearest to me, my sister's son and my heir!

KAI It is always the nearest who deal the
cruellest blows

Here is Arthur, my lord

(ARTHUR and BEDWYR enter)

MARC Tell him, I cannot, Kai

KAI Arthur, it is thought that the banished
Tristan is here

Now, with the Queen, in her room

BEDWYR He is in the room,

My guard saw him clamber up and tap at the
window,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

And the window opened and white arms helped
him in

KAI He is with the Queen at this moment and
we shall take him

ARTHUR Why am I bidden to this assembly,
King Marc?

MARC Because if I take my Queen, as I fear,
I wish

To put her to trial before you

ARTHUR You, as the King,
Are the law, not we

KAI We will bear witness, Arthur
Shall we proceed, King Marc, bid the Queen open?

BEDWYR My guard are ready with spears below
the window,

He cannot escape as he came

MARC Summon the Queen,
Bid her to open her door that her room be searched

ARTHUR One moment, Marc I am bidden
here as accomplice

To the trapping of a woman, a Queen, my hostess
I take no part in a trap Therefore Take heed,
you!

Danger! a trap is set! danger! Look out! Look
out!

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Here come King Marc and his men to murder
you !

(He raises a loud alarm)

KAI You devil, Arthur, to give them warning !
Be silent

(He knocks at the door)

Is the Queen within ? King Marc bids Queen Isolt
open !

If the Queen be there, let her answer the King's
summons

ISOLT Who is there, calling the Queen ?

KAI It is I, Sir Kai,
Charged by the King to bid you open this
door

Will you open, or else compel us to use force ?

ISOLT These are strange words to use to the
Queen, steward

Go tell King Marc, " I will open to none but
him "

KAI King Marc, she says " she will open to
none but you "

MARC Wait, then, until I come

(MARC goes to the upper door)

Open, I command you

(She opens)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT Why do you rouse me thus in the dead
of night?

MARC Because I must search your room Light
candles, Bedwyr,

There at the brazier

ISOLT. ' Why do you bring your soldiers
Thus to my room, to search? What think you
to find?

MARC If you know not, madam, I know not
and will atone

Thrust through the curtains, Bedwyr, look in the
corner

KAI King Marc, will you take this light and
see for yourself

The footprints marked in the meal Did you see,
my lord?

MARC I have seen with my own eyes

KAI Bedwyr's watchers
No doubt will have caught him as he tried to escape

MARC Madam, I ask you to have the goodness
to cloak

And join me there in the hall I would speak
with you

(ARTHUR, KAI, BEDWYR, MARC, *in the hall*)

Did your watchers kill him, Bedwyr?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BEDWYR No, lord, they failed
In the dark, he leaped among them, laid Corvus
dead

And so escaped in the dark, none can say where
 MARC Corvus, my guard, laid dead ! You,
 Kai, and Bedwyr, saw
 The footprints marked on the floor in the Queen's
 room ?

No need to speak, you saw it and therefore know
 ARTHUR This is no quarrel of mine, but I ask
 to remain,
 Lest one, my hostess the Queen, should need a
 friend

(Enter ISOLT)

MARC Sit you down there, madam, I have something to say

(ISOLT sits)

A man was watched to your window and seen to enter

The marks of his feet are plain on your room floor
But that alarm was given, we should have caught
him

In your room with you You are the Queen of
Cornwall,

Quit of the forms of law, but bound to a choice

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Either you shall declare what man was with you,
Or drink the water of test to prove your innocence

ISOLT Dismiss these men from the presence
is it not enough

That you bring them into my room in the dead of
night*

But that you, the King, must arraign the Queen
before them?

MARC I bring three witnesses as the law pre-
scribes

What man was with you?

ISOLT A man who came in and went
Being dark, I could not see his face the flour
Wastefully spilled by your steward on the floor
Will show his footprints

MARC You expected him, you knew him,
Who was he?

ISOLT Nay, your steward expected him,
You and this bevy of knights expected him,
I should ask you Who was he?

MARC God's passion and death!

ISOLT Will you repeat? I could not distin-
guish the name

ARTHUR Beautiful Queen, and you, King Marc,
may I speak?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Life will have to be lived when this is settled
Do not make life more hard by bitterness now
Marc, may I counsel the Queen apart one moment ?

MARC Yes, if she care to hear

ISOLT I will gladly hear him

(MARC, KAI, BEDWYR, *go up stage* ARTHUR *and*
ISOLT *come down*)

Did Tristan escape when he leapt from the window,
then ?

ARTHUR Yes, he killed Corvus and got away
unwounded

ISOLT I thank you, Arthur, for giving me the
alarm

ARTHUR I do not care for trappings but now
to peace

Cannot this trouble be mended, or ended, lady ?

ISOLT Mended ? I am as may-blossom in a
flood,

Or a straw in flames, when the flood has run to
sea

And the flames burnt out, I may be mended or
ended

What is this water of test ?

ARTHUR A drink of ordeal

ISOLT Poison ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ARTHUR The innocent drink it without harm
ISOLT What chance is there of Tristan reaching
his ship?

ARTHUR No great chance, madam

ISOLT Has he any?

ARTHUR Not much

They are beating the countryside with a hundred
men

ISOLT Thank you, good Arthur I have been
blest this night

I have had a lover and found a friend, a true
one

May the gods bless you, Arthur

ARTHUR You, too, Queen Isolt

ISOLT Tell them that I will drink this poisonous
brew

ARTHUR The Queen does me the honour to
bid me say

That she will drink your water of test, King Marc

MARC I am thankful that she, being innocent,
accepts

To drink this drug, which the guilty dare not
drink

Truth, which mortals may hide, is revealed by the
gods.

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT. It is safer to be in God's hand than in
man's

MARC Bring me the flask from the casket in
the aumbry

On the gospel side of the altar in the chapel

(BEDWYR goes)

ISOLT Poison like this is a useful drug to a
husband,

He can murder his wife, yet lay the blame upon
her

KAI None but the guilty are poisoned by it,
Queen Isolt

ISOLT Have all you innocents drunk it?

MARC It is your privilege,
Should you desire, to see a priest ere you drink

ISOLT The drink will shrive me enough, let
the priest sleep

(Sings) A ship came west from the eastern kings,
With a cargo aboard of three good things
She had gold to change and spice to sell,
And a beggar in rags with news to tell

(BEDWYR enters)

BEDWYR. I have brought the flask and a cup,
so please your grace

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC Hold the cup, Bedwyr I call you all
to witness

That the seal on the sacred flasket is unbroken
I break the seal Show that the cup is empty

BEDWYR Bear witness, the cup is empty, a
clean-glass

MARC I empty the hallowed water that shows
the truth

May this bright water declare your innocence
Take the cup, Bedwyr, offer it to the Queen

BEDWYR Madam, I offer the cup as the King
bids

ISOLT I am your Queen, fellow offer it on
your knees

BEDWYR I offer it on my knees

ISOLT I take it from you

This cold, bright poison, like to my husband's
love,

Will soon declare the truth no, I will declare it

I am Tristan's queen, not Marc's I was Tristan's
love

Before ever I saw King Marc I am Tristan's
now

I drink to the setting free of the soul within me,
That it may follow my love, my Tristan slain

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(TRISTAN *enters*)

TRISTAN I am not slain yet Fling down that
poison, Isolt

See there, it burns like quicklime and you stood
by

Making this lady, your Queen, drink of this
death !

Here is one for you, my poisoner, one for you !

Come with me, Isolt

BEDWYR Come all you King's men, help !

KAI Come, rescue, help ! Tristan has seized
Queen Isolt

MARC Stand back, Bedwyr and Kai Tristan,
hark to me

Your godless and lawless path leads to destruc-
tion

TRISTAN Your godly and lawful road was lead-
ing to murder

Keep clear of me, I warn you keep your men
clear

I have horses below and I am going with Isolt,
And the man who tries to stop me shall die on
the spot

ISOLT I am going with Tristan, he is my
lover, I, his

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

This is your Cornish crown, this, your Queen's
wedding ring

I go with my lover to a den in the forest,
Or a wet rock by a brook, or a tilted deck,
And the infamy of the world, and I go with
joy *

(They go out together)

CURTAIN

(Three minutes' interval)

(Full stage The forest, near the Alan)

DINAN My lord and master, your subjects send
me to beg

That you leave this living here in the wood with
your friend

And come to your kingdom at once

TRISTAN And I reply
Will they take the queen of my choice ?

DINAN. No, my prince, no
They ask you to leave this lady, since we in the
North

Demand an unspotted queen

TRISTAN Then inform my subjects

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

That I am filled with beautiful thoughts, and will
not

Trouble my joy with a realm

DINAN Son, they risked their lives,
And starved their bellies, to help you, for twenty
years

TRISTAN Then say I will come in a little while
not yet

DINAN But the heathen are pressing in with
fire and sword
We ask for our King to lead our host to the
war

TRISTAN War is an unreal thing to a man who
has love

DINAN It is not an unreal thing to your friends
and comrades
Hoel is killed, that you used to hunt with and
Ambrose,
Your friend, little Ambrose, was captured and
murdered

By heathen raiders only last week

TRISTAN What, Ambrose?

DINAN He was heard saying " You wait till
Tristan returns "

He thought you would come

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN And I have said that I will
And soon, when I choose

DINAN Come now, there can be no soon

TRISTAN I, who am King, have stated my
will my subjects
Must wait, as I bid

DINAN I am your subject, Tristan,
Only a subject, but your future and fame
Are dear to me as my blood Fling off this
 fever.

This ruin and rot of an unchaste, forsworn trull

TRISTAN Take back those words !

DINAN I will not, because they are true—
You know that they are

TRISTAN That ends it, Dinan now, go

DINAN Will you come to your realm?

TRISTAN When I think it fitting

DINAN But now?

TRISTAN No, I will not come now

DINAN Then your subjects tell you,
Through me, that they cast you out from kingship
and kingdom,
And brand you traitor and choose another as
king
I have declared their bidding

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

I'd have been wiser to have let Kolbein spear
you

When you were a little baby

Farewell, Tristan

(He goes out)

CURTAIN

(No wait)

(Front stage)

(Enter MARC and ARTHUR)

ARTHUR So, Marc, as I have said, the pagans
have marched

Will you come, with the Cornish army, to fight
them with me?

MARC I will muster my men at once we can
march forthwith

ARTHUR With those and the Mendip men we
shall beat them back

But who comes here? It is Dinan, Prince Tristan's
man

MARC You were promised death if you came
to this land again

DINAN You may kill me if you wish here is
my dagger

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC Where are your master traitor and
mistress quean ?

DINAN They are in hell, King Marc

MARC You mean, they are dead ?

DINAN They have not yet the luck to be dead,
they linger

MARC Do you serve them here ?

DINAN I have no service with either

ARTHUR Grant him your pardon, Marc, he
may give you news

MARC Here is your dagger, fellow I shall not
harm you,

No, nor those others, I am too sick at heart

To wish to make others as wretched as myself

Only, you said that they are in hell I would
grieve

If I thought that they needed help

DINAN They need the help of the gods, they
are past men's help

There is no peace for those two under the
moon,

Nothing but horror of heart from their greatness
ruined

They live in a den by the brook, like the fox or
otter

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

They dare not face the daylight they hunt by
night

And at dawn they sleep with a drawn sword laid
between them

MARC Are you sure of that?

DINAN Yes, I will take my oath on it
If you will swear to spare them, I'll show them to
you

MARC My sister's son and my wife, they are
safe from me

DINAN Are they safe from your men-at-arms?

MARC Yes, on my oath

DINAN Come this way, then, King Marc you
shall see them

Softly

(They move off)

*(The curtains, opening the full stage, discover
TRISTAN and ISOLT asleep, a sword between
them Enter MARC and DINAN)*

DINAN There are the two as I said Are they
not lovely?

MARC Ay, they are lovely. Leave me alone
with them

DINAN Step quietly, lest you wake him and
he kill you

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

MARC Our cups are not yet drunken, our three
cold draughts

(DINAN goes)

Youth had to turn to youth, I was too old for her
She is so beautiful, she would damn a saint
I could strike them dead, many would strike
them dead

Killing them will not bring me quiet again
He is more of a man than I, my sister's son
He would kill me, were I thus

They are unhappy,
So Dinan says They are happier than the King
They shall see that I found them sleeping and
pitied them

(He lays his glove between them)

Lead me out of this, Dinan, back to Arthur.

(He goes out)

ISOLT Yes? Who is there? Who goes there
in the thicket?

Someone was here

TRISTAN Where? When? There is no one,
Isolt

It was some bird or beast going by on the leaves

ISOLT Someone stood looking down, with
thought to kill us

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN You have been dreaming

ISOLT No, this was not a dream

I knew it, but could not stir Look! What is
this glove?

Tristan, while we were sleeping, Marc has been
here

This is his glove

TRISTAN It is true That is the King's
But had he been here, he would have killed us,
surely

ISOLT It is not Marc's way, to kill

TRISTAN No, not by himself,
But he dropped this glove in his hurry to call his
men

He will be here with his knights to take us, Isolt

ISOLT Tristan, he did not drop the glove in a
hurry,

He laid it carefully on the hilt of the sword

To show that he might have killed us and did not
kill

He spared us

TRISTAN I should have guarded while you
slept

We two must go upstream to the secret cave,

And start at once, we cannot trust to his mercy

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT I am not sure that I can go to the
cave

TRISTAN You must it is not safe here

ISOLT No, unsafe henceforth
I am unsafe henceforth to you, my Tristan

TRISTAN I welcome the risks you bring

ISOLT That is not what I meant
I meant that I have been harsh, he has been
generous

He has taken the ground from beneath my feet

TRISTAN How so ?

ISOLT I cannot forget this Tristan, if you
had been Marc,

And had seen us lying, would you have spared me ?

TRISTAN Yes

ISOLT And my lover ?

TRISTAN Yes, asleep I'd have roused him
and fought him

ISOLT He is greater than we two, Tristan

TRISTAN He plotted
With Kai, to trap you, he tried to poison you
Had I been awake when he came, I'd have laid
him dead

ISOLT Yes, he risked that, too

TRISTAN Yes, the first risk of his life

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT Sorrow has nobled him, he has done
such a deed

As none but a great man could Therefore I'll
show him

That I see his greatness

TRISTAN I've shown that I see his weakness
I have not killed him that is enough for Marc
And now you are mine

ISOLT I was till to-day not now

TRISTAN Isolt, where are you going?

ISOLT Back to Marc, barefoot

TRISTAN You shall not! What? to be pelted
and put to death?

ISOLT Will my lover bar my way?

TRISTAN No Let us use reason

I see your mood This living here in the wilds
Has been too hard for you you want to go back
To a world of women and friends and fires and
homes

We will go to my kingdom

ISOLT Your subjects have cast you out

TRISTAN We will go to Arthur, then

ISOLT He has gone to the war

TRISTAN Then we will go to your home

ISOLT I have no home now

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN Your mother's house is a home

ISOLT Nevermore to me

TRISTAN Because of me ?

ISOLT Partly

TRISTAN You could go there alone

ISOLT 'I could not go there

TRISTAN Why not ?

ISOLT I should not dare

This love, that I thought was great, is blindness
and greed

And I am unclean, unclean, till I drive some nail
Right through this passionate heart

If he scourge me, well
If he kill me, well, he shall have his chance and
choice

If he cast me out, I will come again, perhaps,
But until then, I am a thing

TRISTAN So am I, Isolt
A young thing, much in love, who saved you
from death,

And flung his kingdom away for the love of you,
Weigh that with creeping in like a thief with a
glove

ISOLT Marc, who is cruelly hurt, is great in
his pain

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN Meaning that I am little?

ISOLT O Tristan, beloved,
See it as I do

TRISTAN I cannot see it as you
Either you have gone mad or you never loved me

ISOLT Never loved you, Tristan? Do not let
us be bitter

We have trodden the depths, let us rise to the heights

TRISTAN By heights, meaning that you return
to your husband?

ISOLT I'll pay a great deed with another

TRISTAN Yes, raiment and women
Are what you want, not me, who am ruined for
 you

Get to your Marc, and tell him I'll tear him
piecemeal

If once he touch you Go, get to your heights
 and depths

I'll follow deer, not women, henceforth, and stab
them,

Stab them and stab them dead Out! get to
your husband

CURTAIN.

(No wart)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(Front stage)

(MARC and ARTHUR)

ARTHUR We will march at dawn, then, Marc

We shall give them battle

About full moon I'll come with your horse at
dawn

MARC Till dawn, then, Arthur good-night

ARTHUR Good-night

(ARTHUR goes ISOLT enters)

MARC Who are you, lady?

ISOLT I am Isolt, your wife, come to return
your glove

I say that I have sinned in act and in thought,
Broken all vows, all pacts, tricked you, betrayed
you

Now, toucht to loyalty by the greatness in you,
I stand ashamed by your generous deed, my
King

I come to atone, or to bear my punishment

MARC Isolt, my queen, we have been harsh to
each other

ISOLT You do not know my worst

MARC You have suffered from mine

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Let us put by the past, for I love you, Isolt,
More than words tell I march to the wars at
dawn

The knights who poisoned your peace from hatred
of you,

Have marched already you have no enemies
here,

None but dear lovers now Go robe you and
crown you,

I will declare you the Queen and the ruler here
While I am east at the war

ISOLT I will atone, Marc,
I promise God bless you, lord

MARC And you, too, Isolt
I shall be home from the wars by the summer's
end,

Please God, my Queen Our life shall be different
then

Come, Queen of Cornwall

(They go out)

(Half minute's interval)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(The main stage Tintagel)

(HOG and SOWKIN)

HOG Our Queen has kept great state since
King Marc went warring

SOWKIN She should not wear this black, King
Marc isn't dead

HOG She wears the black because King Marc
is away

SOWKIN Many might say she wears the black
for another

HOG Now, Sowkin, now ! whatever the other
was,

He is not now She has shut her doors upon him,
Turned her thoughts from him, and all is for King
Marc

SOWKIN The more's the pity, I say, for our
poor daughter
She thinks of nothing but this Prince Tristan in
sorrow

Run mad in the woods, they say

HOG He is crazed from love,
And our girl Pixne is right to be sorry for him,
But for his friendship we wouldn't be free to-day

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

SOWKIN Set free Ah, husband, many a time
and oft

I'd have given much to be back among the swine,
It was so homely among those dear kind creatures,
They weren't like courtiers they loved you for
what you were

HOG The Queen says, after the war we're to
be rangers,

Which means I'll have a horse and a red stomach-
piece,

And you'll be mistress ranger and carry keys
Think of that ! carry keys on a dingle-dangle

SOWKIN I hope these glories will not turn us
from truths

I fear for you, my Hog, as I fear for Pixne
You were always ones for the world

When will the wars end ?

HOG Here comes the Queen, our mistress, God
save you, lady

ISOLT You were asking about the war's end
There is news

The Cornish men have come to the dyke with
Arthur,

They expect to fight the heathen at once Perhaps
They have already fought and ended the war

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

We shall have more news during to-day, no doubt
Tell Constans he must go with the horses to-night

HOG He shall be told, O Queen

(HOG and SOWKIN go out)

ISOLT Would I were a man, to be out there in
the battle,

Instead of a woman, toiling to keep from brooding
On the fierce memories which are woman's portion,
Out there in the forest, where the river runs,
And the soft-foot deer go, and the otter plays,
And the partridge calls, my lover waits for me
He waits in vain, I have bolted the bars on
love

(BRANGWEN enters)

BRANGWEN The hunter speared you a salmon
in the river

He said that he saw a young man in the forest

ISOLT I have no wish to hear of what man he
saw

BRANGWEN This man was running frantic
among the trees,

Beating his head, that was all crowned with flowers

ISOLT There are many masterless men, and
madmen, too,

In the great wood

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BRANGWEN This man wore all the flowers
That you most love June flowers, sweet dog-rose
 buds,

Big ox-eye daisies, that children make old men of,
And clover cops that are partly red, part white

ISOLT If he be mad, he is happier than some
 sane

If the hunter go again to that forest place,
Let him not look at such madmen, nor bring
 tales

Back to this house about them My madness is
 dead

(She goes out)

BRANGWEN You are she who forced me into
 your husband's bed
So that you might love this madman Now you
 have Marc

At the war, because you fled him, and Tristan
 mad

Had Marc but drunken the wine, he would have
 loved me

Ah ! woe to you if you turn again from the King

(TRISTAN climbs in by window)

TRISTAN Where is this Marc, this so-called
 King of Cornwall ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BRANGWEN By the Severn mouth, at the war,
with Arthur, my prince

TRISTAN You lie! Marc goes to no wars
Where is he hidden?

BRANGWEN You know me, Prince, you know
that I do not lie

TRISTAN How many miles to his camp?

BRANGWEN A hundred at least

TRISTAN It is not a hundred

BRANGWEN It's over the moor and the plain,
And over the Mendips beyond

TRISTAN O God! O God!
He is out of my reach When does he plan to
return?

BRANGWEN Not till autumn

TRISTAN Ah, God, I cannot get there to kill
him,

Nor live till he comes, but I'll kill his steward at
least

BRANGWEN He too has gone to the war O
Prince, you are bleeding,
And fevered and broken and starved

TRISTAN Yes, I stumble and hit things

BRANGWEN I will have a bed prepared

TRISTAN No bed for me here

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

No, they strew flour about the beds, for traps
After those traps, all's fair

I've been running the forest

The moon was there and the deer and the grey
wolves

Pitter-patter, pitter-patter, with fangs gleaming

But a moor-man told me that Marc had murdered
her,

So I'll break his neck across and tear out his
heart

But a hundred miles, you said I haven't the
strength

Brangwen, sweet Brangwen, I want to kiss the
ground

Where that most beautiful thing lies buried, at
peace

BRANGWEN Sir Tristan, Queen Isolt is not
dead, but alive

TRISTAN Mind what you say, girl, I am unable
to bear

BRANGWEN She is well

TRISTAN Then where is her prison?

BRANGWEN She is the Queen

TRISTAN And here? In the castle? Take me
to where she is

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

BRANGWEN. Sweet Prince, you must wait

TRISTAN I am mad from waiting Take me,
Or I'll kill you

BRANGWEN Oh, you are hurting ! Loose me,
Prince

You will frighten her as you are I will bring
raiment,

You shall bathe and dress, then see her

TRISTAN I'll see her now

BRANGWEN She thinks you dead For pity's
sake let me warn her

TRISTAN Tell her at once then, girl

BRANGWEN Yes, but you make ready
Come with me, Prince What bliss for you both
to meet

This way, Prince Tristan While you dress I will
tell her

(She leads him off Isolt enters)

ISOLT Tristan is mad, she said He is saner
than I

O I would that we loved like the birds, and then
fled south !

What is this hunting spear ? It is Tristan's spear
Yes, it is Tristan's spear Did the hunter find
it ?

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Or did Tristan bring it here? Yes, Tristan is
here,

To take me back They'll think that I sent for
him

Where is he now? Who is there?

(HOG enters)

HOG It is I, my Queen
Sir Bedwyr brings news of the war he asks to
see you

He is all foundered from riding

ISOLT Bring him in, Ranger
But, Ranger, wait Have you seen Prince Tristan
to-day?

Or heard of his being here?

HOG No, madam, indeed

ISOLT Do you know who found this spear, or
brought it hither?

HOG No spear like that came in at the gate,
Queen Isolt

ISOLT It has been brought here, within the
last five minutes

HOG It was brought through the windows
then not by the doors

ISOLT Bring in our people Let Bedwyr tell
us the news

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(*ALL enter*)

BEDWYR God bless you, Queen I bring you
 news of the battle

ISOLT God bless the bringer of news may the
 news be good

BEDWYR Good news and bad things given
 by God and taken

Hear all, Queen Isolt and all the Cornish court,
Sir Arthur, the leader, bids me to tell you this —

(*Enter TRISTAN from above*)

BRANGWEN O prince, keep away !

TRISTAN Stand aside, Brangwen My Isolt,
 beloved Isolt,

I thought you were dead O my beloved, sweet
 saint,

Angel of God, dear darling , O my heart's best
Come to me I have been frantic for want of
 you

ISOLT Hold this man, Ranger , help to secure
 him, Bedwyr
Hold him away

(*He is caught*)

TRISTAN Isolt, for God's sake, give me
One little word Loose me, friends, let me speak
 to her

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Loose me ! I'll cut your throats else Isolt, my
Isolt !

ISOLT Can you come again, after your uncle's
mercy ?

Could you think I should greet you in my husband's
absence ?

You are outlaw, sentenced to death I could have
you hanged

TRISTAN He told me that you were murdered
and buried O God !

Give me your hands I will have your hands
Let me go

ISOLT Carry that frantic madman into the
court,

Deliver him to the guard as a cast felon,
And let the marshal flog him with fifty stripes
And drag him upon a hurdle out of the bounds
Remove him

TRISTAN Isolt, remember, think what I am !

ISOLT Think, you, of what you are, and of
what I am

BEDWYR Away with him, as Queen Isolt
bids

TRISTAN O gods !

(He is dragged out, struggling and raving)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

ISOLT You harboured that creature, Brangwen.

BRANGWEN Yes I love lovers

And I pity sufferers, life having taught me so

ISOLT And I hate madness and trample it
underfoot

(Enter BEDWYR)

Did you hand that man to the guard?

BEDWYR As the Queen bade

(The others enter)

ISOLT You, take your places, give good heed
and be silent

What news of the war, Sir Bedwyr?

BEDWYR We fought the heathen

At Badon Hill, we fought all day and all night,

And at dawn we fought them again twelve times
we charged them,

Not seven heathen escaped alive they are ended

ISOLT Thank God, who has given victory to
our men

BEDWYR Let us also thank the men whose
lives bought victory

ISOLT Ah! doubtless many most precious have
paid the price?

BEDWYR Many and one most precious of all
to Cornwall

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

King Marc lies dead at the thorn tree by the
brook,

Killed as we broke them He being dead, I salute
Isolt, the Queen of Cornwall God save Queen
Isolt !

Our hearts and swords are Queen Isolt's to com-
mand

ISOLT I thank you for this loyalty to our
House

I pray God help me to govern Cornwall rightly

BEDWYR (*to the household*) That Tristan, whom
we have flogged out of Tintagel,

Was King Marc's heir, and still may claim to be
King

But we have turned him out for ever and ever,
Understand that Queen Isolt alone rules Corn-
wall

The man who kills that outlaw shall be rewarded
May we take our leave, Queen ?

ISOLT Yes, dismiss to your tasks
(BRANGWEN *stays , the rest go*)

Did that prince talk with you before he came
down ?

BRANGWEN Only to say how loving you made
him mad

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Thinking you dead, he has lived upon leaves and
grass,

No diet to withstand flogging from marshal's
men

ISOLT What I have done, I have done Where
is he living?

BRANGWEN He is not living, but dying
There's a hut on the moor

Where PIXNE, the Ranger's girl, leaves comforts
for him

There he will speedily die from grief and shame

ISOLT It is no great pain to die, the heart
being dead

BRANGWEN No, madam, you utter truth it
is no great pain

May I take your orders, madam?

ISOLT Orders? For what?

BRANGWEN For the funeral feast for your royal
husband killed

ISOLT There will be no funeral feast

BRANGWEN For his burial, then

ISOLT There will be no burial save what his
comrades gave him

BRANGWEN Surely his body will be borne from
the field

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

And brought with flowers and lights here to
Tintagel,

To be laid in a sacred place with his father's
bones

ISOLT God made the earth where he lies he
will sleep sweeter

Under the milkwort and the larks of heaven

Than in this charnel of bones and dead Kings'
sin

BRANGWEN He laid his glove beside you in
noble mercy,

Yet you will not lay a flower upon his corpse,

Hacked as it is, in saving you from the heathen

You could not love this royal man who is dead,

I could, and do, as the noblest, gentlest King

That ever was famed in Britain Therefore, my
Queen,

I at least shall go till I find where my lover lies

He was my lover for once, thank God therefor

What worship these hands may render to the
dead,

I will give, madam, being more his wife than you

ISOLT May your last duties comfort your
widowhood

(BRANGWEN goes)

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(ISOLT comes forward to the front stage the curtains
close behind her)

ISOLT So this one triumphs over me as a lover,
Thinks that she loves if, after sighing in secret,
She lays a daisy upon a dead man's body
She has never known what it is

Love is so terrible,
A love like mine I have killed Tristan, my lover ,
Killed him as though with a sword
I have been perilous to Tristan and Marc.
What have they had from me but fever in the
bones?

Marc was dead all the time no need to have
scourged him

I was the virtuous wife , see where it sank me
It is ended nothing can bring it back I have
This little knife of mother's. Poor mother afar,
Who was thoughtful for me before I thought, and
will feel

After I cease to feel The brook will run down
Over the shingle to sea, and the corncrake call,
And the honeysuckle, up in the glen, drowse sweet-
ness

And the moon come over the hill mother will
have them,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

Not I I shall not have them What shall I
have?

Some sky for the two wild swans to be wing in
wing,

Some holly thicket for the stag and his deer,

Some space in heaven, where I, the comet, will
seek

My mate, past withering orbs and moons gone
blind,

For centuries to come I am following, Tristan,

Wait for your cruel killer, a little hour

You shall be my death as I have been yours,
beloved

We who have flooded like the Severn, will ebb

To the great sea together like tides going out.

(She moves off)

(No wait)

(The full stage The forest scene)

PIXNE Why, you are better, sir, you have
come to yourself

Now drink this apple-water it's sweet and
cooling

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

TRISTAN You have been good to me like an
angel of God

But I shall never be better I'm dying, PIXNE
What did you mean by "come to myself"?
Myself,

I had a self once destiny interfered
I was a prince once, girl, but I loved a queen
Before this life I was somewhere linked to her life,
After this life, God knows she will be at my soul,
Either my thirst in hell or my light in heaven

Isolt the sweet, Isolt the bright,
In you my day, in you my night
Isolt my love, Isolt my own

I am fevered and faint I have loved that lady,
PIXNE

PIXNE Sir, do not think of her it was that
that harmed you

You must not talk, lest your coughing begin again

TRISTAN The coughing is over, like me

Isolt my hope, Isolt my star,
In you my share of things that are

I cannot rhyme as I did PIXNE, if you loved me
And I were dying, even if we had quarrelled,

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

You would come to say good-bye ?

PIXNE

You know that I would

So every woman would

TRISTAN

Not all It is hard

For some, when they choose a path, to be thought
mistaken

But something here in my heart speaks of her
coming

To say good-bye to her love

PIXNE

O my prince and master !

Whoever is coming, it is not to say good-bye,

But to heal your cruel wounds and your broken
lungs,

And take you to some nice home with fire and wine

And good food fit for your health

TRISTAN

Look on the road, girl

Is there anyone on a black horse crossing the
moor ?

PIXNE Nobody, sir

TRISTAN

She would come on the

horse, Black Eagle,

Because I gave him to her

PIXNE

There is no black horse

TRISTAN Not yet, perhaps, but look for a
brown horse, Pixne

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129

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

She would send Brangwen first to say she is coming
Is Brangwen there, on a brown horse, with a
message ?

PIXNE There is no horse at all on the moor,
Sir Tristan,

But the carrier's blind white pony, moving away

TRISTAN Brangwen was faithful Brangwen,
a Welsh king's daughter,

Enslaved in a raid a life of hell, which I worsened
Brangwen, good Brangwen, a brown horse, or Black
Eagle

(He lapses, muttering)

PIXNE What are you muttering, Prince ?

Hush ! I think he is sleeping

If he can rest now, he will throw off this cough

I will creep out while he sleeps, to pray at the
cross

The prayers will help I dare leave him for so
long

He is so weak, he must sleep, poor lovely man

(She goes out)

TRISTAN There was no horse on the moor, no
horse at all,

Save a rider with a spare horse drawing nearer

I shall mount and ride with him and not return

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

But there is a horse upon the moor I hear him.
I will look to see alas, I am so weak
That I cannot stand, nor see But on the moorland
A horse is at a gallop heading hither
It is she yes it is she
But she cannot know my dwelling, she will pass me
Isolt, I am here ! Isolt, Queen Isolt, Isolt
No, no, no, she has passed she could not hear me.
What time of year is it ? are the harebells come ?
It's the end of the year with me, Tristan, the
Prince

Isolt the maid, Isolt the Queen,
Isolt the April, budding green

Those are Black Eagle's hoofs Eagle, boy, Eagle !
Yes, it is Eagle, he hears me Isolt is coming
It is Isolt coming to see me before I die

(The voice of ISOLT is heard)

Isolt ! come to me, Isolt !

ISOLT Tristan, my Tristan !
O my beloved Tristan, where are you hidden ?

TRISTAN I am here, Isolt I knew that you
would come

Ah ! I shall not see her face my death is on
me

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

(*ISOLT enters*)

ISOLT O Tristan, my heart's own darling, take
me again

TRISTAN Isolt my blood, Isolt my breath,
In you my life, in you my death
(*He dies*)

ISOLT He has gone from me for ever from this
shell,
This broken body that my cruelty killed
I will come with you, Tristan, stay but a moment
We two will journey together whatever ways
Bodiless spirits travel in the heaven
Of being set free You were more beautiful,
Tristan,
Than the young stag tossing tines near the holly
thicket
You were dearer to me than anything else on
earth
Take pity upon me, darling, though I took none
(*She stabs herself*)
Tristan, my captain, my love, my only love
(*She dies*)
(*Enter PIXNE, DINAN, BRANGWEN, ARTHUR*)
PIXNE It is here, sir, they are here O Sir
Tristan, dead!

TRISTAN AND ISOLT

DINAN Dead we're too late the birds have
flown from their cages

ARTHUR We will bury them together, here
where they lie

If they have sinned, they have loved with a love
exceeding

Now they are spirits of love, not bodies bleeding

CURTAIN

EPILOGUE

DESTINY Not as men plan, nor as women pray,
do things happen

Unthought of, unseen, from the past, comes the
ill without cure,

By the spirit of man and the judgment of God it
is shapen,

And its end is our pride in the dust it is just
it is sure

THE END

NOTE

Stage This play was written to be played in two hours and twenty minutes upon a stage without scenery, hung with back cloths. It was written for a theatre with a fore-stage, or apron, and a main-stage on a somewhat higher level. At the back of, and above, the main stage, there is a gallery or balcony, approached by stairs on each side.

Some of the scenes of the play are designed for action on the apron, when the curtain between the two stages is drawn.

Costume Should be that of Romanised Britons. Arthur should wear golden Roman armour with the scarlet cloak of a general. All the costumes, without exception, should be of bright and vivid colours. That of Kolbein should be the most barbaric and the gayest.

Decorations The shields of King Marc's household bore a golden horse upon a blue field. The

NOTE

men of his household wore white satin scarves
with black borders His banners were white,
with black points

The ages of the characters —

TRISTAN and ISOLT	about twenty years
MARC	„ twenty-nine years
THURID, ARTHUR, and KOLBEIN	„ forty-five „
DINAN, KAI, and BED- WYR	„ fifty-five „
HOG and SOWKIN	„ sixty „
TRISTAN, MARC, KOLBEIN and ARTHUR should be clean-shaven	